

Statistical and Supplemental Data

History and Highlights

Discovered by Ponce De Leon on May 12, 1513, the Florida Keys proper are an elongated chain of low lying islands over 220 miles in length. They extend from the southeastern tip of the Florida peninsula to the Dry Tortugas and lie between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The Keys are separated from the mainland by Biscayne Bay, Barnes Sound, Blackwater Sound and Florida Bay. Monroe County is made up of 822 islands, although only about 30 of them are actually inhabited. The western half of Everglades National Park and the southern tip of Big Cypress National Preserve are largely uninhabited. The highest point in the Keys, only 18 feet above sea level, lies on Windley Key. The Keys are islands of rock, therefore sandy beaches are not common and are mostly restricted to the Atlantic side of the larger islands.

Monroe County is named after James Monroe, the president of the United States, at the time Monroe County became a county. Monroe County is a county of islands, is connected by an overseas highway that was built by the state utilizing 42 defunct railroad bridges between Key Largo and Key West. The original bridges have been replaced; in many cases the old bridges still run parallel to the new and some are utilized as fishing bridges. This highway contains 19.3 miles of bridge spans.

Unlike most counties, there is no single county seat easily accessible to all; every service, every county function, must be accomplished in triplicate. Even with three hospital sites, there is a 45 mile ambulance run between them.

Monroe County has the second highest cost of living of all counties in the state of Florida. The millions of tourists that visit the county each year provide the major source of employment for local residents. Retail services, commercial fishing and government employment are the other industries.

Population¹- 79,330

Land Area¹ - 1,876 square miles

Police Stations¹ - 4

Fire Stations¹ - 9

150 Volunteers

Ambulance Service¹

9 vehicles

46 employees

37 Volunteers

Medical Facilities

Hospitals - 3

Hospital Beds - 267

Education¹

Community College - 1

High Schools - 3

Middle Schools - 1

Elementary Schools- 5

Middle/ Elementary Schools- 3

Registered Voters²

Democrats 19,430

Republicans 19,889

No Party Affiliation 10,537

Minor Parties 2,394

Total 52,250

Road Maintenance³

Number of roads maintained: 1,198

Miles of road maintained: 303

Government

Governing body - Monroe County Board of County Commissioners

Number of elected commissioners - 5

Length of term- 4 years

Chief Administrative Position - County Administrator

¹ Source: Monroe County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

² Source: <http://www.keys-elections.org/>

³ Source: Monroe County Road Department